

June 10, 2009

Chairman George Miller  
House Education and Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Howard "Buck" McKeon  
House Education and Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member McKeon:

On behalf of the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), I write to express our concerns with the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 2460). RILA member companies place great importance on employee relationships and offer competitive and comprehensive benefit and salary packages. For this reason, we share your goal of increasing access to paid leave for working Americans who desire this benefit. If enacted, however, this bill would impose an onerous mandate at a time when our industry is struggling to avoid further layoffs and business closures. The legislation would also force many employers to make tough choices between offering paid sick leave over health insurance, a more flexible leave program, or other benefits that employees may prefer. Needless to say, the ability to design such packages based on the particular needs of our employees is of paramount importance to retailers.

The Retail Industry Leaders Association promotes consumer choice and economic freedom through public policy and industry operational excellence. Our members include the largest and fastest growing companies in the retail industry – retailers, product manufacturers, and service suppliers – which together account for more than \$1.5 trillion in annual sales. RILA members provide millions of jobs and operate more than 100,000 stores, manufacturing facilities and distribution centers domestically and abroad.

Retailers greatly value paid leave programs as key to recruiting the best talent, ensuring employee happiness and productivity, and improving community welfare. However, the one-size-fits-all approach of the Healthy Families Act does not meet the needs of our companies' unique workforces. Further, because of the large part-time and seasonal workforces inherent to our industry, accruing leave upon date of hire and at any number of service hours will make compliance burdensome. Finally, the legislation as drafted would only add to the already complex web of inconsistent but overlapping leave obligations under federal and state laws.

We urge you to put aside the Healthy Families Act and instead engage us and other stakeholders in a conversation to better meet our shared goals of enacting a paid leave law that respects the needs of employers and employees alike.

Sincerely,



John G. Emling  
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs

c.c.: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives